

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
-----100005Z 104442 /64
O 092324Z MAY 77 ZFF 4
FM USDEL SECRETARY IN LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SECTO 04015

EXDIS

FOR HABIB FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR' IZ, US
SUBJECT: IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

REF: (A) STATE 104416 (TOSEC 040061)
(B) STATE 104952 (TOSEC 040097)

1. I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THE SECRETARY OUR PHONE
CONVERSATION SUNDAY NIGHT AND WILEY'S RECOMMENDATIONS
ABOUT APPROACH TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT (BAGHDAD 0771). HE
AGREES THAT WE SHOULD RECAST APPROACH TO IRAQIS ALONG
LINES OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF BAGHDAD REFTTEL. SUBJECT TO ANY
THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE. FOLLOWING REVISED INSTRUCTION
CAN NOW BE SENT TO WILEY.

2. BEGIN MESSAGE:
"1. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL OF
FOREIGN MINISTRY TO MAKE FOLLOWING APPROACH, WHICH
PARALLELS SUGGESTIONS YOU MADE IN BAGHDAD 743 AND TAKES
INTO ACCOUNT YOUR COMMENTS IN BAGHDAD 771. (WE HAVE
AGAIN REVIEWED POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING VISIT BY THE
SECRETARY BUT CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT THIS IS NOT PRACTICAL
AT THIS TIME):

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-- THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON, IN KEEPING WITH
ITS DESIRE FOR THE WIDEST POSSIBLE GOOD RELATIONS
AROUND THE WORLD WOULD LIKE TO TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE
U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS AND IS PREPARED TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH IRAQ WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS.

-- AS A WAY OF BEGINNING THIS PROCESS, SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEND UNDER SECRETARY PHILIP HABIB TO VISIT BAGHDAD FOLLOWING THEIR FORTHCOMING VISIT TO TEHRAN. IF THIS IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ, MR. HABIB COULD ARRIVE IN BAGHDAD ON OR ABOUT MAY 15 FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO DAYS.

--MR. HABIB WOULD HAVE A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO DELIVER TO SADDAM HUSSEIN AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WAYS OF RESUMING U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS INCLUDING THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS REGIONAL MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, TO DESCRIBE AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND A SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. AND WOULD WELCOME LEARNING AT FIRST HAND IRAQI VIEWS ON THESE QUESTIONS.

--MR. HABIB WOULD ALSO BE IN A POSITION TO GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE USG IS NOT SUPPORTING AND WILL NOT IN THE FUTURE SUPPORT KURDISH DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AGAINST THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT.

--WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING IF MR. HABIB WOULD BE RECEIVED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN FOR THE PURPOSES OF DELIVERING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

--MR. HABIB HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN SIMILAR SPECIAL MISSIONS AIMED AT EXCHANGING VIEWS WITH IMPORTANT GOVERNMENTS AND THEREBY STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

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ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO ALGERIA MOROCCO AND TUNISIA' MR. HABIB WAS RECEIVED BY THE RESPECTIVE CHIEFS OF STATE: PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE' KING HASSAN AND PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA.

--IN ADDITION TO OFFERING TO SEND MR. HABIB TO BAGHDAD, SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE PLEASED TO MEET AT AN EARLY OCCASION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR ANY SENIOR EMISSARY THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT MAY DESIGNATE, EITHER IN WASHINGTON OR AT ANOTHER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE LOCATION. TO DISCUSS IMPROVEMENTS IN RELATIONS.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE FOREGOING APPROACH MAY NOT ELICIT A FIRM COMMITMENT FOR HABIB TO SEE SADDAM HUSSEIN. OR THAT AN IRAQI DECISION IN THIS REGARD MIGHT

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NOT BE MADE UNTIL AFTER HABIB HAD ARRIVED IN BAGHDAD AND HAD HAD PRELIMINARY MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR OTHER OFFICIAL. WE WOULD PREFER TO KEEP THE OPTION OPEN OF HAVING HABIB GO TO BAGHDAD EVEN WITHOUT A FIRM COMMITMENT THAT HE WILL BE RECEIVED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN AND TO MAKE FINAL DECISION IN LIGHT OF IRAQI REPLY. OUR FEELING IS THAT, EVEN IF HABIB WERE NOT RECEIVED AT HIGHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, THERE WOULD BE MERIT IN TAKING THIS INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE OUR INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS. WHILE WE AGREE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO RESPOND OTHER THAN ALONG THE LINES OF STANDARD IRAQI POLICY, MESSAGE WOULD NEVERTHELESS HAVE BEEN CONVEYED AND COULD LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR LATER IRAQI RESPONSES. FINALLY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS REALISTIC TO OFFER TO KEEP HABIB'S VISIT SECRET. END OF MESSAGE"

3. ONCE FOREGOING MESSAGE IS SENT TO BAGHDAD' IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT SCENARIO FOR NOTIFYING OTHERS SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF STATE 104416. WHICH THE SECRETARY HAS APPROVED. COULD YOU ASK NEA TO DO THIS, AND ALSO TO DRAFT AND SEND TO ME ON TUESDAY TEXT OF MESSAGE THAT YOU COULD CARRY FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO SADDAM HUSSEIN. I WOULD ENVISAGE THIS AS A GENERAL EXPRESSION OF THE PRESIDENT'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS' WITH DETAILED SUBSTANCE OF OUR APPROACH LEFT
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FOR YOU TO CONVEY ORALLY IN YOUR MEETINGS IN BAGHDAD.
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